

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEA-09 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

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R 251007Z FEB 75 ZEL
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3327
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USCINCEUR
CINCUSNAVEUR
COMIDEASTFOR

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - ADDING EO, TAGS & SUBJ LINE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PONS PINT ET

SUBJECT: ANOTHER PMAC STATEMENT ON ERITREA

1. ETHIOPIAN HERALD OF SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, CARRIES FRONT PAGE STATEMENT BY PROVISIONAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT ALLEGEDLY GIVING "A TRUE ACCOUNT OF RECENT EVENTS IN ERITREA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION." FIRST PORTION OF STATEMENT DEVOTED TO HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF REGION, GIST OF WHICH IS THAT ERITREA HAS ALWAYS BEEN PART OF ETHIOPIA. ARTICLE THEN RECOUNTS CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S EFFECTS AT PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS AND THE "BANDITS" RESPONSES INCLUDING 11 POINT LISTING OF "ACTS OF SABOTAGE." STATEMENT REITERATES WHAT HAS NOW BECOME USUAL TIRKADE AGAINST OSM TDBALIH SABBE, IDRIS MOHAMMED AND OTHER "BANDIT LEADERS" WHO
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ARE TRYING TO SELL THEIR COUNTRY TO SYRIA AND OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES.

STATEMENT CONDEMNS ACTS OF TREASON COMMITTED BY SOME MEMBERS OF THE ERITREAN POLICE WHO RELEASED PRISONERS FROM ASMARA AND ADI QUALA PRISONS AND THEN DEFECTED. ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO ERITREAN PROBLEMS, STATEMENT SAYS, AND POINTS OUT THAT IF PEACEFUL EFFECTS FAIL, PEOPLE OF ETHIOPIA WILL MAINTAIN THE COUNTRY'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY WITH THEIR BLOOD. STATEMENT CONDEMNS "SOME FOREIGN RADIO STATIONS, NEWSPAPERS, AND MAGAZINES" FOR DISSEMINATING DISTORTED AND FALSE REPORTS ABOUT ERITREAN EVENTS. STATEMENT ASSERTS THAT 2,321 "BANDITS" HAVE BEEN KILLED AND 374 OTHERS WOUNDED OR CAPTURED WHILE CLAIMING GOVERNMENT CASUALTIES WERE 83 KILLED, 188 WOUNDED AND 1 MISSING. STATEMENT ALSO INDICATES THAT 124 CIVILIANS "WERE KILLED BY STRAY BULLETS DURING RECENT CLASHES." FULL TEXT OF ARTICLE BEING POUCHED.

2. RADIO ETHIOPIA NOW FOLLOWS EACH NEWS BROADCAST WITH UP TO FULL HOUR EXPLANATION DEVOTED TO ERITREAN EVENTS. USUAL CONTENT OF PROGRAM IS SIMILAR TO ABOVE PARA AND PREVIOUS REPORTING ON SUBJECT AND IS READ BY SPECIAL ANNOUNCER WHO IS WIDELY ADMIRER FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HIS PRESENTATION.

3. COMMENT: DISPARITY BETWEEN FIGURES GIVEN AND CUSTOMARY 5:1 RATIO OF WOUNDED TO KILLED IS DRAWING A LOT OF COMMENT AMONG OBSERVERS HERE. FOREIGN PRESS, PARTICULARLY, GIVES NUMBERS NO CREDENCE WITH USUAL WISECRACK BEING THAT FIGURES FOR "BANDITS" KILLED AND CIVILIANS WHO SUCCEMDED TO STRAY BULLETS MUST HAVE BEEN SWITCHED BY MISTAKE.
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